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ABSTRACT

Play is a natural activity for children that provides opportunities to learn and grow physically, mentally, and socially. These two booklets offer toy selection advice from the government agency charged with protecting the public against unreasonable risks of injury associated with consumer products. The first booklet outlines toy choices for: (1) young infants (birth to 6 months); (2) older infants (7 to 12 months); (3) young toddlers (1 year); (4) older toddlers (2 years); and (5) preschoolers (3, 4 and 5 years). The second booklet outlines toy choices for: (1) primary school children (6, 7, and 8 years); and (2) older school children (9 through 12 years). The abilities and interests sections in each booklet list physical, mental, and social abilities and interests for each age that are relevant to toy selection. The toy list sections give toy suggestions in six major categories, with subcategories under each to help in finding a particular toy including: (1) all toys (general toys); (2) active play; (3) manipulative play; (4) make-believe play; (5) creative play; and (6) learning play. Specific information is presented on the major areas of consideration for toy safety for each age grouping. (SD)

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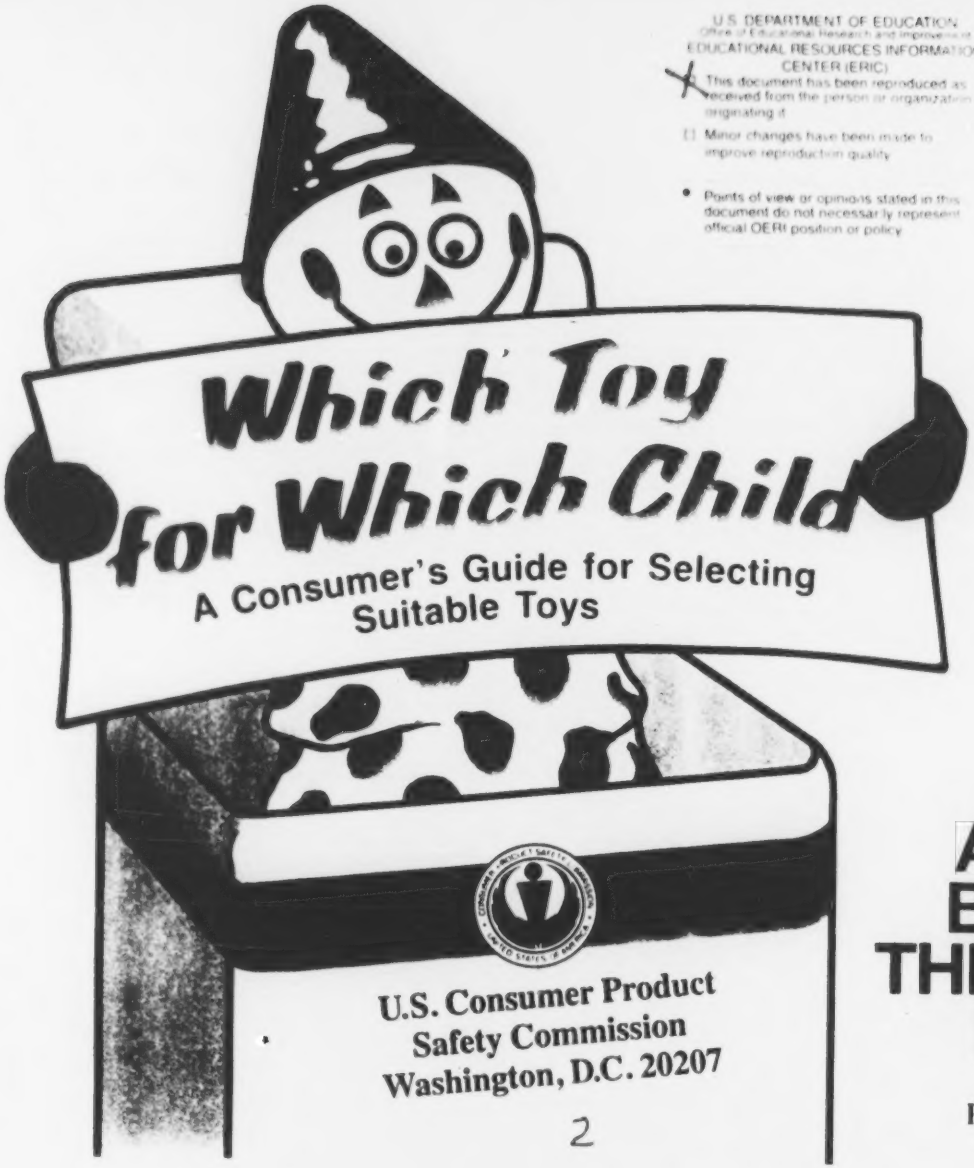

Which Toy for Which Child

A Consumer's Guide for Selecting Suitable Toys

U.S. Consumer Product
Safety Commission
Washington, D.C. 20207

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AGES BIRTH THROUGH FIVE

Pub. No. 285

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Developed under Contract CPSC-C-85-1089 by Dr. Barbara Goodson, Developmental Psychologist, Abt Associates, Inc., Cambridge, Massachussetts, and Dr. Martha Bronson, Educational Psychologist, Cambridge, Massachussetts.

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Play is a natural activity for every young child. Play provides many opportunities for children to learn and grow—physically, mentally and socially. If play is the child's work then toys are the child's tools, and appropriate toys can help children do their work well.

Young children explore objects in their environment by "mouthing" them. Children can choke to death on such items. These items include toys (such as balloons and small balls), and household and food items (such as hot dogs, peanuts, popcorn, coins, batteries, etc.). Although toys intended for young children should be free of small parts that could cause a choking incident, toys intended for older children may find their way into the hands of younger children. **Reminder: Be sure to keep ALL small items out of the hands of children who mouth objects, especially children under the age of three. Remind three and four year olds to keep such items out of their mouths. Instruct older children to keep these items out of reach of younger children.**

This booklet offers suggestions for selecting suitable toys for children **birth to 5 years of age.** It was prepared by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the government agency that is charged with protecting the public against unreasonable risks of injury associated with consumer products.

A parent or friend choosing a toy for a child must consider several things. A good toy should be:

- safe for that child's age, well constructed, and durable;
- appealing and interesting to the child;
- suited to the child's physical capabilities; and
- suited to the child's mental and social development.

This booklet provides some guidelines to help in selecting toys that meet these criteria. The suggestions in this booklet are based on three sources: (1) review of reference works on child development; (2) observations of children at play; and (3) product analyses of toys to determine which characteristics are most critical in defining the appropriate ages of the intended users.

This booklet is organized in the following way: Brief outlines of childrens' **ABILITIES AND INTERESTS** are followed by categorized **TOY LISTS** for each of five age groups.

The five age groups are:
Young infants (birth to 6 months)
Older infants (7 to 12 months)
Young toddlers (1 year olds)
Older toddlers (2 year olds)
Preschoolers (ages 3, 4 and 5)

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ABILITIES AND INTERESTS sections list physical, mental and social abilities and interests for each age that are particularly relevant to selecting appropriate toys. Note that these lists indicate average development—the age range at which the "average" child can be expected to achieve a particular skill or develop a specific interest. The ages in the text are only approximate. Children develop skills at uneven rates—any one child may be "above average" in one skill and "below average" in another skill. For an individual child, the parent is the best judge of the child's abilities and interests at any point in his or her development, and should select toys suitable for that child's profile of capabilities.

TOY LIST sections give toy suggestions in six major categories with subcategories under each to help in finding a particular toy type. The major categories and subcategories are listed on the following page. Note that these sections do not constitute a comprehensive list of all toy products that might be suitable for a particular age. They do suggest general toy types suitable for that age group. This booklet does **not** judge the play value or benefits of specific toys. For example, suitable types of projectile toys are described in the **TOY LISTS,** although the potential safety hazards of these toys lead many in the field to recommend against them.

ALL TOYS (a general category orienting the consumer to special features of toys that are relevant to the particular age group).

ACTIVE PLAY
- Push and Pull Toys
- Ride-On Toys
- Outdoor and Gym Equipment
- Sports Equipment

MANIPULATIVE PLAY
- Construction Toys
- Puzzles
- Pattern-Making Toys
- Manipulative Toys
- Dressing, Lacing and Stringing Toys
- Sand and Water Play Toys

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY
- Dolls
- Stuffed Toys
- Puppets
- Role Play Materials
- Play Scenes
- Transportation Toys
- Projectile Toys

CREATIVE PLAY
- Musical Instruments
- Art and Craft Materials
- Audio-Visual Equipment

LEARNING PLAY
- Games
- Specific Skill Development Toys
- Books

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TOY SAFETY. Major areas of consideration for all toys are safety and durability. Toys should be constructed to withstand the uses and abuses of children in the age range for which the toy is appropriate.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has safety regulations for certain toys. Manufacturers must design and manufacture their products to meet these regulations so that hazardous products are not sold. In addition, many toy manufacturers also adhere to the toy industry's voluntary safety standards.

What the Government Does:

Mandatory Toy Safety Regulations

For All Ages

- No shock or thermal hazards in electrical toys.
- Amount of lead in toy paint severely limited.
- No toxic materials in or on toys
- Art materials used by children under 12 should be non-hazardous and indicate they conform with ASTM D-4236.
- Latex balloons and toys and games with latex balloons must be labeled warning of the choking and suffocation hazards associated with pieces of and uninflated balloons.

Under Age 3

- Unbreakable—will withstand use and abuse.
- No small parts or pieces which could become lodged in the throat.
- Infant rattles large enough not to become lodged in child's throat and constructed so as not to separate into small pieces.
- No balls with diameters 1.75 inches or less.

For Ages 3 through 6

- All toys and games with small parts must be labeled to warn of the choking hazard to young children.

For 3 years and older

- The following toys must be labeled to warn of the choking hazard to young children:
  - All balls and toys and games with balls with a diameter 1.75 inches or less, and
  - All marbles and toys and games with marbles.

Under Age 8

- No electrically operated toys with heating elements.
- No sharp points on toys.
- No sharp edges on toys.

CPSC also can remove from the marketplace toys presenting hazards not covered by the regulations.

What the Industry Does:

Voluntary Standard for Toy Safety

- Puts age and safety labels on toys.
- Puts warning labels on crib gyms advising that

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they be removed from the crib when babies can push up on hands and knees (to prevent strangling).

- Makes squeeze toys and teethers large enough not to become lodged in an infant's throat.

- Assures that the lid of a toy chest will stay open in any position to which it is raised and not fall unexpectedly on a child.

- Limits string length on crib and play pen toys to reduce the risk of strangulations.

What a Parent Can Do:

Reduce Choking Risk

- Look for and read age and safety labels. Any toy that is age labeled for children three years and older should be kept away from children under the age of three — such toys **may** have small parts and **could** cause choking if placed in the mouth.

- Keep uninflated balloons and broken balloon pieces away from children.

- Rounded and oval objects (e.g., balls, marbles, etc.) that fit easily into a child's mouth may be difficult to remove from a throat and could cause choking.

Reduce Strangulation Risk

- Crib toys with strings, cords, ribbons, etc. (used to hang toys across a crib or to the side of a crib) present a strangulation risk when babies are just starting to push up on hands and knees, usually about 5 months of age. **REMOVE ALL CRIB TOYS WHICH ARE STRUNG ACROSS CRIB OR PLAYPEN AREA WHEN BABIES BEGIN TO PUSH UP ON HANDS AND KNEES OR ARE 5 MONTHS OF AGE, WHICHEVER OCCURS FIRST.**

General Toy Safety

- Keep toys intended for older children away from younger children — such toys may injure young children.

- Check all toys periodically for breakage and potential hazards — damaged or dangerous toys should be repaired or thrown away immediately.

- Store toys safely — teach children to put toys away so they are not tripping hazards; check toy boxes and shelves for safety.

For further information write to the:

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
Washington, D.C. 20207

Or call the toll-free hotline:

To report a toy related complaint, call the toll-free hotline:

1-800-638-CPSC

Where to Find Toys Suitable For Your Child:

- If your child is an infant age 6 months or younger, go to page 6.
- If your child is an infant between 7 and 12 months, go to page 9.
- If your child is a 1 year old, go to page 13.
- If your child is a 2 year old, go to page 19.
- If your child is a preschooler age 3, 4 or 5 years, go to page 24.

ABILITIES AND INTERESTS

Young Infants 0 to 6 Months

PHYSICAL

- visual focus matures—follows objects with eyes.
- learns to localize sounds and turns to see.
- gains control of hands—learns to bat, then reach and grasp objects.
- discovers feet—brings feet to mouth and explores with feet.
- begins to sit with support.
- large muscle play may include rolling, scooting, rocking, bouncing.

MENTAL

- explores world with eyes and ears and begins to explore with hands and feet and mouth.
- enjoys creating effects in the environment by own actions.
- begins to recognize familiar people, objects and events—then to anticipate them.
- becomes aware of novelty and strangeness in people, objects and events.
- develops definite preferences for certain people, objects and events.
- may imitate simple movements if in own repertoire.
- does one thing at a time.

SOCIAL

- special interest in people (faces and voices especially).
- begins to smile at faces, voices and mirror image.
- quits crying when sees face or hears voice.
- begins to seek attention and contact with people.
- distinguishes among familiar people and has preferences.
- begins to coo and gurgle, babble and laugh aloud, play with sounds.
- listens to voices and may imitate sounds already in own repertoire.

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TOYS FOR YOUNG INFANTS—0 TO 6 MONTHS

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY
Toys for this age are primarily for: looking, listening, sucking, or fingering. Infants 0-2 months enjoy seeing and hearing interesting things. Infants 2-6 months show growing interest in touching, holding, batting, turning, shaking, kicking, mouthing and tasting objects. Infants like to see: • bright primary colors. • high contrast. • simple designs. • clear lines and features. • human face features (esp. eyes). • bull's eye pattern. Infants enjoy watching hanging objects or "mobiles" that move by wind, wind-up action, or infant's own activity. Toys for watching should be suspended only 8–14 inches (200–360 mm) from the infant's eyes and angled toward his/her eyes, then moved up out of reach when he/she can touch them.	**Push and Pull Toys** *not suited to age group* **Ride-On Toys** *not suited to age group* **Outdoor or Gym Equipment** infant swings (with adult supervision).	**Construction Toys** *from about 4 months:* • soft blocks. **Puzzles** *not suited to age group* **Pattern Making Toys** *not suited to age group* **Manipulative Toys** *from about 6-8 weeks:* • simple rattles. • teethers. • light, sturdy cloth toys. • squeeze toys. • toys suspended above or to the side of infant for batting and grasping. *from about 4 months:* • disks, keys on ring. • interlocking plastic rings. • small hand-held manipulables. • toys on suction cups. • crib gyms (children who can push up on hands and knees can strangle on crib gyms — be sure to remove crib gym from crib or playpen at this time).

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TOYS FOR YOUNG INFANTS—0 TO 6 MONTHS (Cont'd)

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY
Toys for watching are more appealing if they move and make noise (but movement should be slow and noise not too loud or sudden). Infants enjoy variety. **Infants enjoy producing effects on toys by their own activity.** Toys for holding should be light and easy to grasp. Mouthable toys should have **all safety features** recommended for infants: • no sharp points or edges • no small parts to be lodged in throat, ears, nose. • no electrical parts. • nontoxic materials. • no glass or brittle plastic. • no parts to entrap fingers, toes, hands. • no long strings.	**Sports Equipment** *from about 6-8 weeks:* • clutch balls. • texture balls. • soft squeeze balls. (All balls given to this age group should be at least 1-3/4 inches (44 mm) in diameter; however, if any object appears to fit easily in the child's mouth, **keep it away from the child.**)	**Dressing, Lacing, Stringing Toys** *not suited to age group* **Sand and Water Play Toys** *not suited to age group*

TOYS FOR YOUNG INFANTS—0 TO 6 MONTHS

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY	CREATIVE PLAY (arts, crafts, music)	LEARNING PLAY
Dolls • soft baby dolls, soft-bodied dolls, or rag dolls—all with molded (not loose) hair. **Stuffed Toys** • small plush animals. • music box animals (operated and monitored for safety by adults). • grab-on soft toys. **Puppets** • soft hand puppets (held and moved by adults). **Role-Play Materials** • mirrors (large, unbreakable) fastened to crib, playpen or wall (peak interest in mirrors 4-6 months). **Play Scenes (Including Small Figures)** *not suited to age group* **Transportation Toys** *not suited to age group* **Projectile Toys** *not suited to age group*	**Musical Instruments** *not suited to age group* **Art and Craft Materials** *not suited to age group* **Audio-Visual Equipment (Adult Operated)** • records, tapes, or CDs (gentle regular rhythms, lullabies). • music boxes.	**Games** *not suited to age group* **Specific Skill Development Toys** *not suited to age group* **Books** may enjoy listening to a story being read.

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ABILITIES AND INTERESTS

Older Infants 7 to 12 Months

PHYSICAL

- begins to sit alone.
- begins to creep and crawl onto or into things.
- begins to pull to a stand, cruise (walk holding furniture), and walk alone (10–16 months).
- interest in moving about and practicing motor skills.
- develops "pincer" (thumb and finger) grasp and begins to hold objects with one hand while manipulating them with the other.
- with objects wants to: bang, insert, poke, twist, squeeze, drop, shake, bite, throw, open/shut, push/pull, empty/fill, drag along.
- enjoys bath play—kicking and splashing.

MENTAL

- interest in appearing and disappearing (objects and people)—develops "object permanence" (looks for object out of sight at approximately 11 months).
- interest in container/contained relationship—likes to empty cupboards, drawers, and containers of objects.
- interest in letting go and dropping objects (will use string to pull back vanished objects).
- interest in exploration and likes many objects to explore.
- likes to operate simple mechanisms (open/shut, push/pull) and create effects.
- remembers people, objects, games, actions with toys—shows persistence and interest in novelty.
- beginning interest in picture books.

SOCIAL

- may fear strangers or react to change—plays best with familiar person nearby.
- watches and may imitate others.
- sensitive to social approval and disapproval.
- interest in getting attention and creating social effects.
- enjoys simple social games: "peek-a-boo," "bye-bye".
- babbles and plays with language—may try to imitate sounds.
- recognizes own name and may begin to point to named objects or obey simple commands.

TOYS FOR OLDER INFANTS—7 TO 12 MONTHS

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY
Infants 7-9 months interested in longer and more extensive exploration of toys. Infants of this age like to: • bang • insert • poke • twist • squeeze • drop • shake • bite • throw • open and shut • empty and fill Infants 10-12 months show beginning interest in object mastery and like many objects to explore. Infants of this age like: • stacking. • putting in and taking out. • pouring out. • fitting one object into another. • opening and closing. • pressing levers. • turning things (not unscrewing yet). • pushing balls and cars.	**Push and Pull Toys** push toys without rods (simple cars, animals on wheels or rollers). **Ride-On Toys** *not suited to age group* **Outdoor or Gym Equipment** infant swings (with adult supervision). soft low climbing platform for crawlers.	**Construction Toys** soft blocks. rubber blocks. rounded wood blocks. **Puzzles** *from about 10 months:* brightly colored, lightweight crib and playpen puzzles (2-3 pieces). **Pattern-Making Toys** *not suited to age group* **Manipulative Toys** teethers. light sturdy cloth toys. toys on suction cups. small, hand-held manipulables. disks/keys on rings. squeeze-squeak toys. roly-poly toys. activity boxes and cubes. pop-up boxes (easy operation). containers with object to empty and fill.

TOYS FOR YOUNG INFANTS—7 TO 12 MONTHS (Cont'd)

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY
Generally, infants in this age range are interested in: • operating simple mechanisms. • containers and the container/contained relationship. • appearing and disappearing objects. As at earlier ages infants enjoy producing effects by their own actions. Toys for infants • safe for mouthing. • non-toxic materials. • no sharp points or edges. • nonbreakable; no glass or brittle plastic. • no small parts to be lodged in throat, ears, nose. • no parts to entrap fingers, toes, hand. • no long strings.	**Sports Equipment** transparent balls chime balls flutter balls action balls (All balls given to this age group should be at least 1-3/4 inches (44 mm) in diameter; however, if any object appears to fit easily in the child's mouth, **keep it away from the child.**)	large rubber or plastic pop beads. simple nesting cups. stacking ring cones (few rings and safe stick). graspable (unbreakable) mirror toys which can be held and played with. loses interest in crib gyms and toys suspended above when can sit up and move about (crib gyms can create a strangulation hazard; stop using when child can push up on hands and knees at about 5 months of age). **Dressing, Lacing, Stringing Toys** *not suited to age group* **Sand and Water Play Toys** activity boxes for bath. simple floating toys.

TOYS FOR YOUNG INFANTS—7 TO 12 MONTHS

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY	CREATIVE PLAY (arts, crafts, music)	LEARNING PLAY
Dolls • soft baby dolls, soft bodied dolls, or rag dolls—all with molded (not loose) hair. **Stuffed Toys** • small plush animals. • music box animals (operated and monitored for safety by adult). • grab or soft toys. • big soft toys for hugging and roughhousing. **Puppets** • soft hand puppets—child may handle but must be operated as puppets by adult. **Role Play Materials** low wall-mounted mirrors to see self sit, creep, crawl, etc. **Play Scenes (Including Small Figures)** *not suited to age group* **Transportation Toys** simple push cars (one piece). **Projectile Toys** *not suited to age group*	**Musical Instruments** • rubber or wood blocks that rattle or tinkle. **Art and Craft Materials** *from about 12 months:* • large paper. • large crayons for scribbling. **Audio-Visual Equipment (Adult Operated)** • records, tapes, or CDs (simple songs, lullabies, music with simple rhythms). • music boxes.	**Games** *not suited to age group* **Specific Skill Development Toys** *not suited to age group* **Books** • cloth books. • plastic books. • small cardboard books. *Note: Some children enjoy "lap reading" (being read to) from this age onward. When adult-held, paper picture books are appropriate.*

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ABILITIES AND INTERESTS

Young Toddlers (1 Year Olds)

PHYSICAL

- endless exercise of physical skills.
- likes to lug, dump, push, pull, pile, knock down, empty and fill.
- likes to climb—can manage small indoor steps.
- manipulation is more exploratory than skillful.
- active interest in multiple small objects.
- by 2 years, can kick, catch a large ball.
- by 2 years, can string large beads, turn knob, use screw motion. (All beads given to this age group should be at least 1-3/4 inches (44 mm) in diameter; however, if any object appears to fit easily in the child's mouth, **keep it away from the child.**)

MENTAL

- interest in causing effects.
- interest in mechanisms and objects that move or can be moved—prefers action toys.
- combines objects with other objects—makes simple block structures, uses simple stacking toys, does simple puzzles.
- very curious—constant experimentation with objects.
- interest in hidden-object toys.
- at 1½ to 2 years, groups/matches similar objects—enjoys simple sorting toys.
- identifies objects by pointing—can identify pictures in book.
- enjoys water, sand play.
- makes marks on paper, scribbles spontaneously.
- first imitative play—imitation of adult tasks, especially caretaking and housekeeping tasks.

SOCIAL

- most solitary play—relates to adults better than to children.
- tries to do adult tasks.
- expresses affection for others—shows preference for certain soft toys, dolls.
- likes being read to, looking at picture books, likes nursery rhymes.
- by 1½, enjoys interactive games such as tag.

TOYS FOR YOUNG TODDLERS—1 YEAR OLDS

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY
Children prefer action toys, toys that produce movement or sounds by child's own efforts • toys need not be highly detailed but should be realistic looking. • toys should be lightweight for easy lifting, carrying. • bright colors preferred. In play, child always on the move—large muscle activities such as running, climbing dominate over small muscle activities such as exploring objects, constructing. Child beginning to combine, put together objects. Beginning of imitative play.	**Push and Pull Toys** • push toys with rods (rods with large handles on ends). • toys to push on floor—simple, sturdy, with large wheels. • special noise and action effects. • for steady walkers, pull toys on strings (broad-based to tip less easily). *from about 1½:* • simple doll carriages. • wagons—low, open, big enough for child to get in. • small rocking horses—confined rocking arc, stout handles rather than reins, knee height on child. push/pull toys filled with multiple objects. **Ride-On Toys** • ride-ons propelled by pushing with feet—no pedals. • stable ride-ons—4 or more wheels, wheels spaced wide apart, child's feet flat on floor when seated. • ride-ons with storage bins. • ride-ons that make noise, look like animals.	**Construction Toys** • small lightweight stacking blocks (15–25 pieces). *before 1½, most interlocking mechanisms are too difficult* *from around 1½:* • solid wooden unit blocks (20-40). • large, hollow building blocks. • large plastic bricks (2–4 inches or 50–100 mm) to press together. **Puzzles** • simple pre-puzzles or form boards—2–3 pieces, each piece a familiar shape. *from around 1½:* 3-5 piece puzzles with knobs easier to use (knobs firmly attached). **Pattern-Making Toys** peg board with a few large pegs. **Manipulative Toys** • activity boxes attached to crib or playpen or freestanding—simple action mechanisms (doors, lids, switches). • hidden object toys. • simple pop-up toys operated by pushing a button or knob. • nesting cups—round shape, few pieces. • simple stacking toys—few pieces, no order necessary. • shape sorters—a few common shapes.

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TOYS FOR YOUNG TODDLERS—1 YEAR OLDS (Cont'd)

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY
Toys should meet safety regulations for age: • sturdy, unbreakable; not likely to break into small pieces and strong enough for child to stand on or in. • nontoxic materials. • no sharp points or edges. • too large to be lodged in windpipe, ears, nostrils. • no detachable small parts. • no parts that could pinch or entrap fingers, toes, hair. • not put together with easily exposed straight pins, sharp wires, nails. • no electrical parts, unless supervised by adult.	**Outdoor and Gym Equipment** • all gym equipment needs adult supervision. • low, soft climbing platforms. • tunnels for crawling. • swings (pushed by adult) — seats curved or body-shaped, of energy-absorbing material with restraining strap. *from about 1½:* • simple, low climbing structures. • low slides with handrails. • outdoor play equipment with stationary rather than moving parts. **Sports Equipment** • soft light weight balls, especially with interesting visual effects, noises, unpredictable movement. • chime ball, flutter ball. • large balls (easier for child to maneuver). (All balls given to this age group should be at least 1-3/4 inches (44 mm) in diameter; however, if any object appears to fit easily in the child's mouth, **keep it away from the child.**)	*from around 1½:* • fit-together toys of about 5 pieces. • activity boxes with more complex action mechanisms—turning knob or dial, turning simple key. • pounding/hammering toys. • nesting toys—square or other shapes. • stacking toys of 4-5 pieces. • simple matching toys. • simple number/counting boards (1-5) with large pegs. • simple lock boxes & lock/key toys. • jack-in-the-box toys (adult supervision if toys spring back quickly). • toys with screwing action (child can usually manage only 1 turn). **Dressing, Lacing, Stringing Toys** • large colored beads (fewer than 10). (All balls given to this age group should be at least 1-3/4 inches (44 mm) in diameter; however, if any object appears to fit easily in the child's mouth, **keep it away from the child.**) *from around 1½:* • lacing cubes or board with thick, blunt spindle. **Sand and Water Play Toys** • simple floating toys—1 or 2 pieces, easy to grasp in one hand. • sponges; small shovel and pail. *from around 1½:* • nesting tub toys. • bathtub activity centers. • funnels, colanders. • small sandbox tools (rake should have blunt teeth).

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TOYS FOR YOUNG TODDLERS—1 YEAR OLDS

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY	CREATIVE PLAY (arts, crafts, music)	LEARNING PLAY
Dolls • soft-bodied or all-rubber baby dolls. • simple dolls with no hair, moving eyes, or movable limbs. • dolls to fit easily in child's arms, or small dolls (5-6 inches). • simple accessories for caretaking—bottle, blanket. • simple doll clothes, need not be detachable. *from around 1½:* • large peg people. **Stuffed Toys** • very soft, lightweight, easy to hold. • slender limbs on toys for easy grasp. • for safety reasons no whiskers, buttons, bow, bells. **Puppets** • puppets operated by adult. *from around 1½:* • small hand puppets sized to fit child's hand. • soft, plush puppets that double as stuffed toys. **Role-Play Materials** • toy telephone; full-length mirror. • simple housekeeping equipment. • simple doll equipment—carriage, bed.	**Musical Instruments** • rhythm instruments operated by shaking—enclosed bells, rattles. *from around 1½:* • rhythm instruments, operated by banging—cymbals, drums, xylophones. **Art and Craft Materials** • large crayons. • sturdy, large-size paper.	**Games** *not suited to age group* **Specific Skill Development Toys** *not suited to age group*

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TOYS FOR YOUNG TODDLERS—1 YEAR OLDS (Cont'd)

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY	CREATIVE PLAY (arts, crafts, music)	LEARNING PLAY
from around 1½: • simple dress-ups—hats, scarves, ties, shoes, jewelry. • role-play toys that can be pushed & make noise—mower, vacuum. • child-sized equipment—oven, fridge, sink, table and chairs. **Play Scenes** (All figures should be at least 1-3/4 inches (44 mm) in diameter; however, if any object appears to fit easily in the child's mouth, **keep it away from the child.**) *before 1½:* • child may enjoy handling, carrying around figures. *from around 1½:* • familiar, realistic scenes — farm, airport, garage — not overly detailed pieces (4–6 pieces). • prefer scenes with moving parts or that make noise. **Transportation Toys** • lightweight vehicles of a size for easy handling (not too small) and with secure wheels. • push or pull cars and trains. • vehicles that make noise. • first train—1-2 cars, no tracks, simple or no coupling system.	**Audio-Visual Equipment** operated by adult: • tapes, records, or CDs of nursery rhymes and rhythms. • hand-cranked music box, worked by child if crank is large and easy to turn.	**Books and 'Peek-a-Boo' Books** • sturdy cloth, plastic, cardboard books with few pages. • picture books, nursery rhymes, stories with repetition. • books to be held and read by adult can be more fragile, with paper pages. *from around 1½* • touch-me or tactile books.

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TOYS FOR YOUNG TODDLERS—1 YEAR OLDS (Cont'd)

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY	CREATIVE PLAY (arts, crafts, music)	LEARNING PLAY
from around 1½: • more detailed vehicles—doors, hoods that open. • trains with simple coupling system—large hooks, magnets. **Projectile Toys** *not suited to age group*		

ABILITIES AND INTERESTS

Older Toddlers (2 Year Olds)

PHYSICAL

- skilled at most simple large muscle skills.
- lots of physical testing—jumping from heights, climbing, hanging by arms, rolling, galloping, somersaults, rough-and-tumble play.
- throws and retrieves all kinds of objects
- pushes self on wheeled objects with good steering.
- by 2½ to 3 years, good hand and finger coordination.
- lots of active play with small objects—explores different qualities of play materials.

MENTAL

- interested in attributes of objects—texture, shape, size, color.
- can match a group of similar objects.
- plays with pattern, sequence, order of size.
- first counting skills.
- first creative activities (drawing, construction, clay)—process still more important than final product.
- beginning to solve problems in head.
- imaginative fantasy play increases—continued interest in domestic imitation.
- fantasy play alone or with adult—child also makes toys carry out actions on other toys.

SOCIAL

- main interest still in parents, but begins to play cooperatively with other children (especially 30 to 36 months).
- uses language to express wishes to others.
- engages in game-like interactions with others—also some pretend play with others.
- enjoys hearing simple stories read from picture books, especially stories with repetition.
- strong desire for independence—shows pride in accomplishment.

TOYS FOR OLDER TODDLERS—2 YEAR OLDS

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY

Beginning of cooperative, social play.
 	
Increasing interest in pretend play.
 	
Love of physical, active play.
 	
Child prefers action toys, toys that produce movement or sounds by child's own efforts.
 	
More realism preferred.
• begins to pay attention to qualities of objects.
• prefers toys with working parts.
 	
Toys should be lightweight enough for easy lifting, carrying.
 	
Bright colors preferred.
	Push and Pull Toys
	• pull toys with strings.
	• doll carriages.
	• wagons.
	• small, light wheelbarrow.
	• interest in push toys that look like adult equipment—lawnmower, vacuum, shopping cart.
	
	Ride-On Toys
	• interest in realistic-looking ride-ons—tractors, motorcycles.
	• ride-ons with storage trays or bins.
	• ride-ons propelled by bouncing up and down.
	• when children begin to pedal (around 2 1/2–3), small tricycle.
	
	Outdoor and Gym Equipment
	• all gym equipment needs adult supervision.
	• tunnels.
	• climbing structures and slides.
	• stationary rather than moving outdoor equipment.
	• swings with curved, soft seats and restraining straps.
		Construction Toys
		• solid, wooden unit blocks.
		• large, hollow building blocks (cardboard, wood, plastic).
		• large, plastic bricks (2–4 inches or 50–100 mm) to be pressed together.
		• plastic interlocking rings; large plastic nuts and bolts.
		
		Puzzles
		• fit-in puzzle:
		  • *2 to 2½ years*, 4-5 pieces.
		  • *2½ to 3 years*, 6-12 pieces.
		• puzzles with knobs easier (knobs should be firmly attached).
		
		Pattern-Making Toys
		• peg boards with large pegs.
		• color cubes.
		• magnetic boards with shapes, animals, people.
		• color forms (*from around 2½*).
		
		Manipulative Toys
		• fit-together toys of 5-10 pieces.
		• nesting toys with multiple pieces, including barrel toys that require screwing motion.

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TOYS FOR OLDER TODDLERS—2 YEAR OLDS (Cont'd)

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY
Toys should meet safety regulations for age: • sturdy, unbreakable; not likely to break into small pieces and strong enough for child to stand on or in. • nontoxic materials. • no sharp points or edges. • too large to be lodged in windpipe, ears, nostrils. • no detachable small parts. • no parts that could pinch or entrap fingers, toes, hair. • not put together with easily exposed straight pins, sharp wires, nails. • no electrical parts, unless supervised by adult.	**Sports Equipment** • sleds sized to child (shorter length than child's height). • spinning seat. • pool toys (tubes, mats) with adult supervision. • balls of all sizes, but especially large balls. (All balls given to this age group should be at least 1-3/4 inches (44 mm) in diameter; however, if any object appears to fit easily in the child's mouth, **keep it away from the child.**)	• number/counting boards with large pegs. • shape sorters with common shapes. • pounding/hammering toys. • smelling jars. • feel bag or box. • color/picture dominoes. • simple lotto matching games based on color, pictures. **Dressing, Lacing, Stringing Toys** • large colored beads. (All beads given to this age group should be at least 1-3/4 inches (44 mm) in diameter; however, if any object appears to fit easily in the child's mouth, **keep it away from the child.**) • lacing card or wooden shoe for lacing. • dressing books and dolls. • frames, cubes for lacing, buttoning, snapping, hooking. **Sand and Water Play Toys (with Adult Supervision)** • bathtub activity centers. • nesting tub toys. • tub toys with removable figures, accessories. • linking tub toys. • small boats (no metal parts). • small and large sandbox tools (with blunt edges). • water/sand mills. • sprinklers.

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TOYS FOR OLDER TODDLERS—2 YEAR OLDS

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY	CREATIVE PLAY (arts, crafts, music)	LEARNING PLAY
Dolls • soft-bodied and rubber baby dolls. • more realistic dolls with hair and moving eyes. • dolls to fit in child's arms; also small, realistic dolls. • talking dolls operated by pulling string. • large peg dolls. • doll accessories — simple and sturdy. • caretaking accessories—bottle, blanket. • simple removable garments (hook and loop, large snap fasteners). **Stuffed Toys** • soft, pliable animals. • mother and baby combinations. • preference for realistic animals, replicas of familiar characters. • toys with music box inside. **Puppets** • small hand puppets (hand-and-arm puppets too large). • lightweight, sized to fit child's hand. • puppets doubling as stuffed toys. • puppets representing familiar characters.	**Musical Instruments** • all rhythm instruments — bells, rattles, cymbals, drums, triangle, rhythm stick, sand blocks, xylophones. • horns and whistles (*around 2½*). **Art and Craft Materials** • large crayons. • non-toxic paints (finger and tempera) and short handled brushes with blunt ends. • clay. • sturdy markers. • blunt-end scissors. • chalkboard, large chalk. • colored construction paper.	**Games** • lotto matching games based on color pictures. • dominoes, especially giant dominoes. • board games based on chance — only a few large pieces or pairs. **Specific Skill Development Toys** simple teaching toys for: • matching/sorting, shapes, colors, letters/sounds, numbers, concepts. • all electrically powered toys need adult supervision.

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TOYS FOR OLDER TODDLERS—2 YEAR OLDS (Cont'd)

MAKE—BELIEVE PLAY	CREATIVE PLAY (arts, crafts, music)	LEARNING PLAY
Role-Play Materials • dress-ups and costumes. • equipment should be realistic-looking. • child-sized equipment — stove, cooking board, refrigerator. • doll equipment. • all housekeeping equipment — cleaning sets, pots and pans, bath and laundry. • toys that can be pushed — vacuum, lawnmower, shopping cart. • full-length mirror. **Play Scenes** • familiar, realistic-looking scenes — farm, garage, airport. • scenes with multiple pieces but not highly detailed. • preference for moving parts, parts that make noise. • interior of scenes easily accessible. • vehicle sets with figures. **Transportation Toys** • small, realistic cars (not metal). • vehicles with moving parts. • large trucks (metal too heavy) — moving parts, parts operated by large lever (with knob on end). • cars, trucks with removable figures, accessories. • small trains with simple coupling mechanism — no tracks. **Projectile Toys** *not suited to age group*	**Audio-Visual Equipment** • operated by adult; tapes, records, CDs. • hand-cranked music box if crank is large and easy to turn.	**Books** • sturdy books with heavy paper, cardboard pages. • short simple stories with repetition and familiar subjects. • simple pictures with clear color, few details. • pop-up books. • hidden picture books. • dressing books.

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ABILITIES AND INTERESTS

Preschoolers 3,4 and 5 Years

PHYSICAL

- runs, jumps, climbs, balances with assurance — by 5, gross motor skills are well developed.
- likes risks, tests of physical strength and skill — loves acrobatics and outdoor equipment.
- increasing finger control – can pick up small objects, cut on a line with scissors, hold pencil in adult grasp, string small beads. (Most children in this age group can begin using toys with smaller components. If child is still mouthing objects, select toys without small parts.)
- expert builder — loves small construction materials and also vigorous activity with big blocks, large construction materials.
- by 5, rudimentary interest in ball games with simple rules and scoring.

MENTAL

- familiar with common shapes, primary colors.
- interest in simple number activities, alphabet play, copying letters, matching/sorting.
- by 5, sorts and matches using more than one quality at a time.
- around 4, begins to be purposeful and goal-directed, to make use of a plan.
- interest in producing designs, including puzzles, and in constructing play worlds.
- first representational pictures.
- prefers realism.
- interest in nature, science, animals, time, how things work.
- peak interest in dramatic play — recreates adult occupations, uses costumes and props.

SOCIAL

- beginning to share and take turns; learning concept of fair play.
- by 5, play is cooperative, practical, conforming.
- interested in group pretend play.
- not ready for competitive play because hates to lose.
- enjoys simple board games based on chance, not strategy.
- more sex differentiation in play roles, interests.
- enjoys looking at books and listening to stories from books.

TOYS FOR PRESCHOOLERS—3, 4, AND 5 YEARS

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY
Preschoolers prefer toys with realistic detail and working parts. Increasing interest in dramatic and pretend play, by age 5, peak period for dramatic play, with all sorts of props. Period of peak interest in puppet play. Increasing construction activity, often with plan or goal. Period of peak interest in play scenes, small figures and cars. Most children in this age group can begin using toys with smaller components. If child is still mouthing objects, select toys without small parts.	**Push and Pull Toys** • small wagons. • small wheelbarrow. • push toys resembling adult tools — lawnmowers, vacuum, shopping cart. • doll carriages and strollers. *from age 5:* • full-size wagons, scooters. **Ride-On Toys** • tricycles sized to child. • 3- and 4-wheel pedal toys. • vehicles with steering mechanisms. • prefer realistic, detailed vehicles. • full-size rocking horse. *from age 4:* • low-slung tricycles. • battery-operated ride-ons. *from age 5:* • small bicycle with training wheels and footbrakes, sized to child. • bicycle helmet. **Outdoor and Gym Euipment** • adult supervision recommended for gym equipment. • stationary outdoor climbing equipment. • slides (with siderails) and ladders. • swings with curved, soft seats. • balance board.	**Construction Toys** • solid wood unit blocks — large and small. • large hollow blocks. • most types of interlocking building systems, pieces of all sizes (plastic rather than metal pieces). • no motorized parts. • prefer sets that make realistic models. • can connect pieces in specific order to create simple models. **Puzzles** • fit-in or framed puzzles: *age 3*, up to 20 pieces; *age 4*, 20-30 pieces; *age 5*, up to 50 pieces. • large, simple jigsaw puzzles (10-25 pieces). • number or letter puzzles; puzzle clocks • cardboard puzzles. **Pattern-Making Toys** • bead stringing – longer, thinner string – with stiff tip), large beads. (If child is still mouthing objects, any object that appears to fit easily in the child's mouth should be kept away from the child.) • peg board with small pegs. • color cubes/color forms. • magnetic boards with shapes.

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TOYS FOR PRESCHOOLERS—3, 4, AND 5 YEARS (Cont'd)

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY
Toys should be sturdy • not likely to break easily into small pieces or leave jagged edges. • no sharp points or edges. • not made of glass or brittle plastic. Toys should be of nontoxic materials. Toys should have no electrical parts unless supervised by adult.	*from age 4:* • equipment with movable parts: small seesaws, hanging rings. • swings with flat seats, plastic or rubber belts. • rope ladders and ropes. • gym sets with enclosures for pretend house or fort. **Sports Equipment** • balls of all shapes, sizes (If child is still mouthing objects, any object that appears to fit easily in the child's mouth, **keep it away from the child.**) • double-blade ice skates. • sleds size-graded (no handbrakes or steering mechanisms). *from age 4:* • lightweight soft baseball and bat. • junior-sized soccer ball, football. • speed-graded roller skates (plastic wheels, no ball bearings for reduced speed). • kites. • wading pool. *from age 5:* • jump ropes. • skis (sized to child). • flying disks (especially lightweight ones). • flat nosed magnetic or Velcro darts. • inner tubes, kickboards, mattresses for beginning swimmers (adult supervision needed).	*from age 4:* beginning interest in design materials — mosaic blocks, felt boards; can follow, copy simple sequence. *from age 5:* simple weaving (looper & heddle loom); small beads to string (½ in.); block printing equipment. **Manipulative Toys** • matching toys by color, shape, or picture; *from age 4*, by concept, letters (ABC), numbers (1–10). • sorting toys; number rods. • number boards with smaller pegs. • simple counting toys; lock boxes. • nesting toys with multiple pieces and screw closing. *from age 4:* geometrical concept toys. *from age 5:* simple models of mechanical devices or natural objects; more complex lotto matching toys. **Dressing, Lacing Stringing Toys** frames/cards to button, hook, tie. *from age 5:* simple sewing kits with thick cloth & blunt needle (with supervision). **Sand and Water Play Toys** • large and small sandbox tools; bubbles • wind-up bath toys; bath activity centers. *from age 4:* • sand molds; water pump. • realistic working models of boats (no sharp metal parts).

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TOYS FOR YOUNG PRESCHOOLERS—3, 4, AND 5 YEARS

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY	CREATIVE PLAY (arts, crafts, music)	LEARNING PLAY
Dolls • realistic dolls with detail and accessories, especially baby dolls. • dolls with hair, moving eyes, movable limbs, special features. *from age 5:* • child-proportioned dolls (can dress dolls if garments and fastenings are simple). • paper dolls to be punched out. **Stuffed Toys** • stuffed toys with accessories — ribbons, bells, simple clothes. • realistic-looking toys, replicas of famous characters. • music box toys. *from age 5:* collecting toys in sets. **Puppets** • simple sock or mitten puppets. • finger puppets. • simple puppet theater (no scenery). *from age 5:* hand-and-arm puppets. more detailed puppets: puppets with limbs. **Role-Play Materials** • dress-ups, costumes of all types. • realistic, detailed equipment — by 5, want it to really work. • housekeeping and cooking equipment. • toy telephone; toy camera; doctor kits.	**Musical Instruments** • all rhythm instruments. • xylophones. • instruments that require blowing — harmonica, horns, whistles, simple recorder. • wind-up music boxes. • piano — one-finger tunes. **Art and Craft Materials** *from age 3:* • large crayons with many colors. • color paddles. • magic markers. • finger and tempera paint. • adjustable easel. • brushes of various sizes. • clay, including modeling clay and tools. • chalkboards and chalk of various sizes. • scissors with rounded ends. • paste and glue. • simple block printing equipment. • pop-it beads. • large beads to string. • simple sewing kits (without needles) until age 5. *from age 4:* • increased interest in art products; also, can copy order. • workbench, hammer, nails, and saw (with supervision). *from age 5:* • smaller crayons; coloring books; water color paints; simple weaving loom; small beads to string; sewing kits with large, blunt needles.	• pool toys (tubes, mats) with adult supervision. **Games** • dominoes (color or number). • simple matching and lotto games based on color, pictures. • simple card games. • bingo (picture). *from age 4:* • first board games, based completely on chance—games should have few rules, simple scoring, no reading required beyond ABC, only a few pieces. • games requiring simple fine-motor coordination (picking up or balancing objects). **Specific Skills Development Toys** simple electronic and other teaching toys for: • matching/sorting. • shapes, colors. • numbers and letters. *from age 4:* • simple computer programs for teaching color matching, letters, classification, numbers, sounds. • simple science models.

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TOYS FOR YOUNG PRESCHOOLERS—3, 4, AND 5 YEARS (Cont'd)

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY	CREATIVE PLAY (arts, crafts, music)	LEARNING PLAY
• military costumes and props. • specialized doll equipment. • cash register, equipment to play store. • play stages, large mirror. **Play Scenes** • scenes with a variety of realistic accessories and working parts. • favorite themes – garage, farm, airport, space, fort. • action adventure sets, action figures. • first doll house – simple, few rooms, easy access, space to move objects around, sturdy furnishings. *from age 5:* • can manipulate very small pieces, attention to realistic detail. **Transportation Toys** • toy cars of all sizes – small metal cars, trucks with very realistic detail. • large-scale trucks, road machinery that really works (dumps, digs). • action adventure vehicle sets. • small, realistic trains. *from age 5:* small trains with tracks, can work most train coupling systems, can plan, build simple track layouts, wind-up and spring-driven cars. **Projectile Toys**—*none before age 4* • soft, flexible projectiles. • action figures with projectile weapons. *from age 5:* • guns shooting ping pong or foam balls, soft darts.	**Audio-Visual Equipment** • hand-cranked music boxes. • parent-operated record, tape and CD player. *from age 4* • record and tape players for child to operate. • simple video games. *from age 5* • radio.	*from age 5:* • science materials – magnets, flashlight, shells and rocks, magnifying glass, stethoscope, prism, aquarium, terrarium. • clock. • printing set. • toy typewriter or computer. • simple calculator. • computer programs to teach simple programming. **Books** • picture books, simple stories, rhymes. • complex pop-up books. • like complex illustrations with an abundance of detail. *age 3 interests:* • here-and-now stories. • animal stories. • alphabet books. • words and rhymes. *age 4 interests:* • wild stories, silly humor. • information books. • familiar places, people. *age 5 interests:* • realistic stories. • poetry. • primers. • animals who behave like people.

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U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
Washington, D.C. 20207

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U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT
SAFETY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

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A Consumer's Guide for Selecting Suitable Toys

AGES SIX THROUGH TWELVE

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Washington, DC 20207

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Developed under Contract CPSC-C-85-1089 by Dr. Barbara Goodson, Developmental Psychologist, Abt Associates, Inc., Cambridge, Massachussetts, and Dr. Martha Bronson, Educational Psychologist, Cambridge, Massachussetts.

Play is a natural activity for every young child. Play provides many opportunities for children to learn and grow—physically, mentally and socially. If play is the child's work then toys are the child's tools, and appropriate toys can help children do their work well.

This booklet offers suggestions for selecting suitable toys for children **6 to 12 years of age.** It was prepared by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the government agency that is charged with protecting the public against unreasonable risks of injury associated with consumer products.

A parent or friend choosing a toy for a child must consider several things. A good toy should be:

- appealing and interesting to the child;
- suited to the child's physical capabilities;
- suited to the child's mental and social development;
- well constructed, durable and safe for that child's age.

This booklet provides some guidelines to help in selecting toys that meet these criteria. The suggestions in this booklet are based on three sources: (1) review of reference works on child development; (2) observations of children at play; and (3) product analysis of toys to determine which characteristics are most critical in defining the appropriate ages of the intended users of toys.

This booklet is organized in the following way: Brief general outlines of childrens' **ABILITIES AND INTERESTS** are followed by categorized **TOY LISTS** for each of five age groups.

The two age groups are:
Primary school children (ages, 6, 7 and 8)
Older school children (ages 9, 10, 11, & 12)

ABILITIES AND INTERESTS sections list physical, mental and social abilities and interests for each age that are particularly relevant to selecting appropriate toys. Note that these lists indicate average development—the age range at which the "average" child can be expected to achieve a particular skill or develop a specific interest. The ages in the text are only approximate. Children develop skills at uneven rates—any one child may be "above average" in one skill and "below average" in another skill. For an individual child, the parent is the best judge of the child's abilities and interests at any point in his or her development, and should select toys suitable for that child's profile of capabilities.

TOY LIST sections give toy suggestions in six major categories with subcategories under each to help in finding a particular toy type. The major categories and subcategories are listed on the following page. Note that these sections do not constitute a comprehensive list of all toy products that might be suitable for a particular age. They do suggest general toy types suitable for that age group. This booklet does **not** judge the play value or benefits of specific toys. For example, suitable types of

projectile toys are described in the **TOY LISTS**, although the potential safety hazards of these toys lead many in the field to recommend against them.

ALL TOYS (a general category orienting the consumer to special features of toys that are relevant to the particular age group)

ACTIVE PLAY
- Push and Pull Toys
- Ride-On Toys
- Outdoor and Gym Equipment
- Sports Equipment

MANIPULATIVE PLAY
- Construction Toys
- Puzzles
- Pattern-Making Toys
- Manipulative Toys
- Dressing, Lacing and Stringing Toys
- Sand and Water Play Toys

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY
- Dolls
- Stuffed Toys
- Puppets
- Role Play Materials
- Play Scenes
- Transportation Toys
- Projectile Toys

CREATIVE PLAY (Arts, Crafts and Music)
- Musical Instruments
- Art and Craft Materials
- Audio-Visual Equipment

LEARNING PLAY
- Games
- Specific Skill Development Toys
- Books

TOY SAFETY. A major area of consideration for all toys is the durability and safety of the toys. Toys should be constructed to withstand the uses and abuses of children in the age range for which the toy is appropriate.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has set safety regulations for certain toys. Manufacturers must design and manufacture their products to meet these regulations so that hazardous products are not sold. In addition, many toy manufacturers also adhere to the toy industry's voluntary safety standards.

What the Government Does:
Mandatory Toy Safety Regulations

For All Ages

- No shock or thermal hazards in electrical toys.
- Amount of lead in toy paint severely limited.
- No toxic materials in or on toys
- Art materials used by children under 12 should be non-hazardous and indicate they conform with ASTM D-4236.
- Latex balloons and toys and games with latex balloons must be labeled warning of the choking and suffocation hazards associated with pieces of and uninflated balloons.

Under Age 3

- Unbreakable—will withstand use and abuse.
- No small parts or pieces which could become lodged in the throat.
- Infant rattles large enough not to become lodged in child's throat and constructed so as not to separate into small pieces.
- No balls with diameters 1.75 inches or less.

For Ages 3 through 6

- All toys and games with small parts must be labeled to warn of the choking hazard to young children.

For 3 years and older

- The following toys must be labeled to warn of the choking hazard to young children:
  - All balls and toys and games with balls with a diameter 1.75 inches or less, and
  - All marbles and toys and games with marbles.

Under Age 8

- No electrically operated toys with heating elements
- No sharp points on toys
- No sharp edges on toys

CPSC also can remove from the marketplace toys presenting hazards not covered by the regulations.

What the Industry Does:

Voluntary Standard for Toy Safety

- Puts age and safety labels on toys
- Puts warning labels on crib gyms advising that they be removed from the crib when babies can get up on hands and knees (to prevent strangling)
- Makes squeeze toys and teethers large enough so as not to become lodged in an infant's throat
- Assures that the lid of a toy chest will stay open in any position to which it is raised and not fall unexpectedly on a child
- Limit string length on crib and playpen toys to reduce the risk of strangulation.

What a Parent Can Do:

Reduce Choking Risk

- Look for and read age and safety labels. Any toy that is age labeled for children three years and older should be kept away from children under the age of three — such toys may have small parts and could cause choking if placed in the mouth.
- Keep uninflated balloons and broken balloon pieces away from children.

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- Rounded and oval objects (e.g., balls, marbles, etc.) that fit easily into a child's mouth may be difficult to remove from a throat and could cause choking.

Reduce Strangulation Risk

- Crib toys with strings, cords, ribbons, etc. (used to hang toys across a crib or to the side of a crib) present a strangulation risk when babies are just starting to push up on hands and knees, usually about 5 months of age. **REMOVE ALL CRIB TOYS WHICH ARE STRUNG ACROSS CRIB OR PLAYPEN AREA WHEN BABIES BEGIN TO PUSH UP ON HANDS AND KNEES OR ARE 5 MONTHS OF AGE, WHICHEVER OCCURS FIRST.**

General Toy Safety

- Keep toys intended for older children away from younger children — such toys may injure young children.
- Check all toys periodically for breakage and potential hazards — damaged or dangerous toys should be repaired or thrown away immediately.
- Store toys safely — teach children to put toys away so they are not tripping hazards; check toy boxes and shelves for safety.

For further information write to the:

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
Washington, D.C. 20207

Or call the toll-free hotline:

To report a toy related complaint, call the toll-free hotline:

1-800-638-CPSC

Where To Find Toys Suitable for Your Child:

- If your child is age 6, 7, or 8 years, go to page 6
- If your child is age 9, 10, 11, or 12 years, go to page 11

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ABILITIES AND INTERESTS

Primary School Age 6, 7 and 8 Years

PHYSICAL

- large muscle abilities and interests include: jumprope, hopscotch, stunts and climbing (trees, trapeze), ice skating, roller skating, riding bicycle, water sports, ball play (but most not ready for competitive team sports)
- small muscle abilities and interests include: printing, drawing with pencils, simple sewing (can sew straight line), simple carpentry (can saw straight line), weaving, braiding, string small beads, cutting out paper dolls, jigsaw puzzles
- will practice in target games or to improve a skill

MENTAL

- interest in reading, spelling and printing activities and games
- interest in simple arithmetic activities and games, and in time, calendars, weights, value of coins
- interest in nature and in simple science activities and experiments
- interest in collecting things and in hobbies
- interest in the line between fantasy and reality--likes magic and "tricks"
- interest in producing finished products (art, models, crafts, sewing, carpentry)
- beginning interest in other times and other places

SOCIAL

- great interest in the peer group and in "belonging"—enjoys special friends, cliques, gangs, secret languages and passwords
- prefers to play with same sex peers
- great increase in ability to play cooperatively with others—enjoys group activities
- interest in "fair play" and living up to standards (own and group's standards of excellence)
- continues interest in dramatic play (puppets, dolls, paper dolls, dress-ups, war games, cowboys and Indians, cops and robbers, space games)—by age 8 increased interest in producing shows and plays
- beginning interest in the wider community

TOYS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE—6, 7, AND 8 YEARS

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY
Child primarily interested in goal rather than means or process Experimentation becomes increasingly "scientific" Child less dependent on concrete object for concept Child can • sort and classify using more than one criterion • increasingly make use of reading, writing and simple arithmetic in games and toys • do simple sewing, weaving, braiding, ceramics, jewelry kits—has greatly increased fine motor control • use simple mechanical toys (cars, trains) Child is interested in • time and seasons and in toys marking time • collections of things • line between fantasy and reality (likes tricks and magic and disguise kits) • producing products in arts, crafts, woodworking etc	**Push and Pull Toys** *not suited to age group* **Ride-On Toys** two-wheeled bike (sized to child—child should be able to straddle male bike with both feet on ground) push scooters battery-powered ride-ons **Outdoor and Gym Equipment** complex gym sets with rings, bars, swings, ropes, rope ladders, slides complex climbing structures jump ropes	**Construction Toys** large sets of blocks or bricks (80-100 pieces) construction sets (wood, plastic, metal)—complex, can manipulate tiny nuts and screws sets with motorized parts complex gear systems can copy or build models following instructions—prefer sets that produce realistic models **Puzzles** jigsaws (50-100 pieces) three-dimensional puzzles map puzzles more complex tangrams **Pattern Making Toys** design/pattern toys various types of materials to produce products: • wood • plastic • paper • cardboard • beads • ceramic tiles

TOYS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE—6, 7, AND 8 YEARS (Cont'd)

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY
• kits (science, craft, models) and can follow simple directions • adult roles and likes realistic costumes and props for character play • rudiments of sports and skill development Children show increasing variation in interest and abilities Reading interests vary but child beginning to be able to use dictionary Beginning of interest in giving "shows" Great interest in "fairness" but hates to lose and will cheat to win in games Toys should have no sharp points or edges No electrical parts without adult supervision	**Sports Equipment** regular baseball bat and ball basketball (junior size for ages 6, 7) soccer regular flying disks adult-sized football roller and ice skates ski equipment hockey equipment badminton equipment ping pong (age 8) horseshoes croquet sleds, including ones with steering mechanisms and handbrakes toboggans simple swimming and underwater equipment	• cloth • block printing kits to produce design products **Manipulative Toys** complex lock boxes balance scales (5-7 years) small number rods and blocks math models—illustrating concepts like fractions and arithmetic mechanical models—levers, pulleys, pendulums, etc. **Dressing, Lacing, and Stringing Toys** stringing beads of any size, including pottery, glass, or other fragile beads simple sewing, weaving, braiding making simple clothes for doll jewelry kits, spool knitting, sewing kits, handloom, braiding materials **Sand and Water Play Toys** working models of boats elaborate sailboats realistic working boats battery-operated boats remote-control boats sandbox tools and molds of all sizes

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TOYS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE—6, 7, AND 8 YEARS

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY	CREATIVE PLAY (arts, crafts, music)	LEARNING PLAY
Dolls likes lots of accessories, clothes and special equipment big baby dolls or dolls of own age, fashion dolls and teenage dolls, collector dolls, hair cutting dolls, paper dolls, fantasy character dolls/action figures, doll house dolls **Stuffed Toys** small collectible toys large, floppy stuffed toys (some interest in oversized animals) very realistic toys replicas of famous animals unusual, unique stuffed toys **Puppets** puppet theater with curtains and scenery soft hand puppets, rod puppets, puppets with arms, jointed puppets **Role-Play Materials** wall and hand mirrors realistic accessories for role play that really work adult role dress-ups and elaborate make-up	**Musical Instruments** rhythm instruments learning to play real instrument and read music may be interested in formal music lessons (piano, autoharp, ukulele, recorder, violin, horn) age 7 or 8 may be interested in formal dance lessons (girls especially) (ballet, modern dance, tap dancing, folk dancing, acrobatics) at about age 8 **Art and Craft Materials** crayons, paint, markers, pencils pastels and art chalks variety of papers and more complex coloring books sketch pads all art papers construction paper and cardboards all glues except dangerous ones regular scissors clay—oil-based and self-hardening plaster of paris stencils papier mache	**Games** simple strategy and rule games such as: dominoes, marbles, race games, card games, strategy games, checkers, Chinese checkers, word games, bingo, arithmetic games (simple adding or subtracting games), rummy, simple spelling games, simple quiz games, simple guessing or deduction games, games based on familiar characters, games with fantasy or adventure themes **Specific Skill Development Toys** conceptual models—human body, physical world, stars, space, moon science kits: chemistry set, science models, weather kit calculator (simple arithmetic functions) clocks and watches balance and other scales protractor microscope telescope/field binoculars toy or simple real typewriter

TOYS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE—6, 7, AND 8 YEARS (Cont'd)

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY	CREATIVE PLAY (arts, crafts, music)	LEARNING PLAY
magic and disguise kits props for dramatic play (store, school, library, office, war games, robots, space, etc.) cooking and sewing equipment that really works **Play Scenes** doll houses (number of rooms, stories, special furniture and dolls)—interested in minute detail models with more grown-up themes (space, military toy soldiers) **Transportation Toys** little vehicles (3-4 inches) particularly preferred—collectible vehicles large-scale realistic trucks, planes, etc. with working parts elaborate wood or metal train sets electric trains (8-9 years) simple remote control vehicles electric racing cars **Projectile Toys** action figures (5-7 inches) with projectile weapons guns that shoot ping-pong balls or soft darts helicopter-type projectiles water pressure rockets (8+ years)	looms (heddle and looper) knitting spool leatherwork kits jewelry-making kits bead/braiding kits sewing kits with needles mosaic tile kits jewelry/copper/enameling kits more complete woodworking tools (with adult supervision) beginning photography—real camera model airplane, other kits **Audio-Visual Equipment** record or tape player to run by self (not too fragile) radio blank tapes to make own recordings more complex stories and books on records or tape folk songs introduction to orchestra records fast dancing (such as folk dancing) records	more complex printing sets more complex video and computer games (checkers and chess programs—age 7 and older—and some target games) electronic/computer teaching games: • arithmetic • drawing/graphics • story writing • word processing • simple programming concepts • music writing **Books** developing individual reading preferences common interests: childhood classics myths, legends biographies poetry fairy tales dictionaries (age appropriate) books about: children, animals, nature, space, planes, electricity, magic

ABILITIES AND INTERESTS—

Older School Age 9, 10, 11 and 12 Years

PHYSICAL

- sports important to both sexes—this age range is ready for athletic and team sports: riding (bicycle and horseback), skating, swimming, sailing, tennis, fishing, and a variety of ball games including baseball and soccer
- enjoys dexterity games: pick-up sticks, marbles, jacks, darts, ring toss, tiddlywinks
- can make complex constructions and models, and do jigsaw puzzles of 100 to 1000 pieces
- interested in a variety of arts and crafts—small muscle ability is essentially that of an adult by age 10
- may be interested in formal music, dance and art or craft lessons

MENTAL

- able to play and carry out activities on own
- emergence of independent critical thinking—evaluates ideas and people—may be interested in biographies and history
- increased individual differences in abilities and interests
- may be interested in science—increasing ability to arrange, classify and generalize
- may enjoy hobbies, collections, or scrapbooks
- interest in stories or plays, and acting in them
- interest in gadgets and inventions (including computers)

SOCIAL

- can work cooperatively with others and is interested in clubs and in group activities and productions
- can play complex card and table games with rules—begins to be able to lose gracefully
- enjoys competitive games and sports
- interest in drama and dramatic games (charades, gestures)
- growing interest in the larger community and the world

TOYS FOR OLDER SCHOOL AGE—9, 10, 11 AND 12 YEARS

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY
Great increase in individual differences in abilities and interests—may be interested in: • reading (and in specific kinds of books) • science (with some specific interest like chemistry or astronomy) • computers (some like to make their own programs) • hobbies • crafts (skill approaches adult level by age 12) • building models • collections (some become serious collectors and many enjoy small collections) • formal training in arts (music, drama, drawing) or specific crafts (pottery, weaving, carpentry, sewing, etc.) • producing shows or plays (live actors, animals, puppets, etc.) • both sexes now enjoy athletics and/or competitive sports, but specific interests vary—child may be interested in formal training in some athletic skill	**Pushing and Pulling Toys** *not suited to age group* **Ride-On Toys** two-wheeled bicycle (can usually manage adult size by 11 or 12 and can manage a bicycle with geared speeds) battery-powered ride-ons (many can manage gearshifts) (12-year-olds not yet ready to handle motorized ride-ons that require consistent judgment about speed, safety, etc.) **Outdoor and Gym Equipment** complex gym sets with rings, bars, swings, ropes, rope ladders, slides (many children getting too big for average size of home sets) complex climbing structures jumpropes some like weightlifting	**Construction Toys** large sets of blocks or bricks (at least 80-100 pieces) construction sets (wood/plastic/metal)—can put together complex parts, manipulate tiny nuts and screws, and follow directions sets with motorized parts complex gear systems can copy or build models following instructions—prefer sets that produce realistic models **Puzzles** jigsaw puzzles • age 8-10, 100-500 pieces • age 10+, 500-2000 pieces three-dimensional puzzles complex tangrams **Pattern-Making Toys** great increase in design skills in this age range design or pattern work in virtually any medium (wood, plastic, paper, cardboard, cloth, tiles, beads, etc.) kits to produce design products design interest merges into arts and crafts interests

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TOYS FOR OLDER SCHOOL AGE—9, 10, 11 AND 12 YEARS (Cont'd)

ALL TOYS	ACTIVE PLAY	MANIPULATIVE PLAY
Fine motor abilities begin to approach that of an adult—may enjoy dexterity games, complex constructions, or puzzles Interested in more complex table games and enjoys strategy and competition—can now stick to the rules and lose gracefully	**Sports Equipment** baseball, basketball and soccer equipment (regular size) football (regular size) flying disks (regular size) roller and ice skates ski equipment hockey equipment sleds with steering mechanisms and hand brakes toboggans croquet sets ping pong sets horseshoe sets badminton equipment tennis equipment golf equipment swimming and underwater equipment	**Manipulative Toys** may enjoy producing or manipulating: • math models • mechanical models • science models (of body, stars, planets, etc.) • simple physics models **Dressing, Lacing, Stringing Toys** stringing beads of any size or material many skills such as sewing now becoming crafts may enjoy: • simple to complex handlooms • jewelry making kits • knitting kits • needlepoint kits • leather sewing kits • leather and plastic braiding kits **Sand and Water Play Toys** can operate small real boats with adult supervision (sailboats, rafts, canoes) elaborate model boats, including gas powered boats (with supervision) remote control boats

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TOYS FOR OLDER SCHOOL AGE—9, 10, 11 AND 12 YEARS

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY	CREATIVE PLAY (arts, crafts, music)	LEARNING PLAY
Dolls dolls are increasingly decorative pieces or hobbies preference for lots of accessories interest in careers (dolls with roles) may enjoy: fashion dolls/teenage dolls, costume dolls, collector dolls, dollhouse or miniature dolls, haircutting dolls, dolls representing familiar characters, fantasy/action characters **Stuffed Toys** small collectible toys large, floppy stuffed toys (some interest in oversized animals) very realistic toys replicas of famous animals (may have particular love of horses, dogs, cats, bears, etc.) unusual, unique stuffed toys **Puppets** can manipulate puppet theater, curtains and scenery interested in scripted puppet plays may enjoy: hand puppets, puppets on rods, stringed marionettes **Role-Play Materials** mirrors (used in adult way)	**Musical Instruments** may be interested in real instruments (piano, autoharp, ukulele, children's sousaphone, recorder, violin, horn, etc.) and formal lessons may be interested in formal dance lessons (ballet, modern dance, tap dancing, folk dance, acrobatics) may be interested in songbooks and group singing **Art and Craft Materials** age 10-13—formal art lessons following interest crayons, paints, markers, pencils, art chalks, casein paints variety of papers, sketch pads, art papers and cardboards very complex coloring/design books stencils papier mache all glues except dangerous ones regular scissors clay (oil-based, self-hardening, pottery clay) plaster of paris	**Games** now likes games requiring: speed, dexterity, strategy, competition, extended concentration labyrinth games; chess; cardgames; more complex math games; complex detection games; word games/spelling games; quiz games; dominoes; checkers; Chinese checkers; bingo; marbles; parcheesi; theme and strategy games **Specific Skill Development Toys** conceptual models (human body, physical world, stars, space, moon) science kits (chemistry sets, science models, weather kits) microscope telescope field binoculars protractor clocks, watches, stopwatches calculators standard typewriter (can learn to type) more complex video games including target games

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TOYS FOR OLDER SCHOOL AGE—9, 10, 11 AND 12 YEARS (Cont'd)

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY	CREATIVE PLAY (arts, crafts, music)	LEARNING PLAY
dolls and role play leads to sewing (for dolls), real cooking, dramatic games (characters, etc.) and real dramatics (making up or giving plays) dolls, doll houses, toy soldiers, scale model toys may become hobbies child may like: real cooking and sewing equipment make-up and disguise kits, props, adult clothes and costumes for plays and dramatics **Play Scenes** elaborate doll houses (may become hobby) may be interested in collections or hobbies with toy soldiers, forts, robots, etc. **Transportation Toys** remote control vehicles electric trains electric racing cars gas-powered toy cars (11-12 years) (with adult supervision) **Projectile Toys** water pressure rockets guns that shoot smaller projectiles cork guns (11+ years) BB guns (with adult supervision—11+ years) combustion rockets (12 years) (with adult supervision, 11+ years)	age 10-13: formal craft lessons following interest can learn and use (lessons and kits): real sewing, knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, crocheting working (simple) sewing machines weaving (heddle or looper loom) clay modeling/pottery/ceramics jewelry making (beads, enamels, shells) printing leather work and leather braiding photography as art (real equipment) woodburning more complex woodworking basket making kite making puppet making (and other crafts and skills) **Audio-Visual Equipment** record or tape player to run by self (if not too complex or fragile) blank tapes to make own recordings story and book records/tapes individual preferences in music— some like: popular music classical music folk music musical comedy music	computers with: game-generating computer programs word processing programs typing programs (age 10 and up) drawing/graphics programs special-subject programs: spelling, vocabulary, grammar, chemical elements, economics, history, geography, ecology, political science, programs to teach programming **Books** great individual differences in amount and type of reading preferred some like: childhood classics; myths and legends; biographies; poetry; mysteries; westerns, adventure; fantasy, science fiction; science, information books; anthologies; books about animals (especially horses); books about sports; dictionaries (age appropriate) some prefer specific types of books or books by a specific author

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